

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 INT-05 OPIC-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USDOC FOR BEWT/TDAD/PLANAGAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EIND, EEWT, UR, UK

REF: MOSCOW 7733

1. DURING CONVERSATION JUNE 6, UK EMBASSY COMMERCIAL OFFICER INFORMED COMMATT THAT RIO TINTO-ZINCE WAS DEFINITELY INTERESTED IN PLAYING MAJOR ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF UDOKAN COPPER PROJECT (SEE FEFTEL). UK COMMOFF NOTED THAT TWO MAJOR RTZ DELEGATIONS HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED UDOKAN WITH SOVIETS. FIRST GROUP, HEADED BY SIR VAL DUNCAN'S DEPUTY IN RTZ TOP MANAGEMENT, HELD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH ENDED WITH INFORMAL AGREEMENT THAT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT BASIS OF MUTUAL INTEREST TO JUSTIFY MOVING INTO TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. SECOND RTZ GROUP INCLUDED TOP TECHNICAL REPS. THIS GROUP BEGAN CONCRETE DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING SOVIET PROPOSAL THAT 100 TON-PER-DAY PILOT PLANT BE CONSTRUCTED AT UDOKAN TO PROVE OUT PROCESS FOR SMELTING UDOKAN ORE. MAJOR PROBLEM WHICH HAS DEVELOPED THUS FAR CONCERNS PAYMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DETAILED PROPOSAL FOR PILOT PLANT. RTZ ESTIMATES THAT THIS WORK COULD COST AS MUCH AS 200,000 POUNDS, AND FOR TIME BEING COMPANY IS INSISTING THAT

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SOVIETS SHARE THESE EXPENDITURES. SOVIETS ARE (NATURALLY)

RESISTING THIS APPROACH.

2. COMMENT: ABOVE INFORMATION ALLIES WITH REPORT REFTEL
ON PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN BECHTEL REP AND SOVIETS.
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT RTZ IS OFF TO GOOD START WITH SOVIETS ON
UDOKAN, AND IF U.S. METALS COMPANIES WISH TO MAKE COMPETITIVE
OFFERS, THEY SHOULD MOVE EXPEDITIOUSLY. GIVEN SIZE OF UDOKAN
PROJECT, HOWEVER, IT IS OPEN TO QUESTION WHETHER COMPETITIVE
APPROACH BY U.S. COMPANIES WOULD BE ADVISABLE. USDOC/BEWT/
TDAD MIGHT WISH TO SUGGEST TO ANY U.S. COMPANIES WHICH ARE
DEFINITELY INTERESTED IN THIS PROJECT THAT THEY CONSIDER
WORKING WITH RTZ AND FORMING, FROM OUTSET, CONSORTIUM OF METALS
COMPANIES, ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION FIRMS (SUCH AS BECHTEL)
AND MINING EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS WHICH COULD PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS
JOINTLY.
STOESSEL

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